



**United States Department of Agriculture  
Office of Communications**

September 25, 2013

To: Mike Young, Director  
Office of Budget and Program Analysis

From: Matt Paul, Director  
Office of Communications

Subject: Plan for Emergency Shutdown

The attached is the Office of Communications (OC) emergency shutdown plan of action that OC is prepared to implement should there be an interruption of funds availability due to budget appropriations not being approved.

Additional questions or concerns about this matter should be directed to the Director of the Office of Communications, Room 402-A, (202) 720-4623.

OFFICE OF COMMUNICATIONS  
SHUTDOWN IN THE ABSENCE OF APPROPRIATIONS

This document describes the plan for shutdown of agency activities in the event of late appropriations or other similar situations requiring the discharge of all employees except those conducting essential activities.

Actions

The Office of Communications (OC) has two Category III excepted employees: the Director of the Office of Communications and the Deputy Director. In the event of a shutdown, the Director or the Deputy Director will be available to provide communications assistance to the Secretary.

All employees – OC has 78 total employees, 51 funded by appropriations and 27 funded through the Working Capital Fund. 76 employees are not excepted and will be asked to come to work for at least the first half day. After this only the excepted employees will report.

On the first day all employees will be directed to report to their supervisors to receive assignments of duties or other pertinent information for an orderly closedown. For those teleworking, "reporting" maybe be done by telephone.

The voice mail message on the OC main contact number for reporters will be changed to reflect the close down.

Employee auto reply email will be updated and employees will also change their voice mail messages to reflect the close down.

Unless otherwise directed by OMB, the USDA.gov web site will go dark and be linked to a "splash" page. Agency web sites will go dark and be linked to a splash page unless they are outside of the NITC environment and do not have the resources to quickly take down a web site. In that case, the agency will post a statement to their web site referencing the shut down. This disposition will be communicated to all agency heads, web masters, and public affairs directors. The timing of the shutdown is dependent on how soon it becomes apparent that a shutdown will occur.

Any OC staff on travel will be notified to return prior to the lapse in appropriations.

All records, personal property, real property, and facilities will be maintained and protected by those entities charged with security for the Jamie L. Whitten and South buildings until such time as funds are appropriated.

When it is determined that an employee is no longer needed to perform activities to accomplish the orderly close down, the employee(s) will be notified and placed on furlough or other personnel action as appropriate.

As employees are about to be released, the employee should enter their time for the pay period up to the time of their release in the WebTA system.

Other instructions and specific guidance will be issued as circumstances require at each occurrence of a potential shutdown situation.

#### Program Impact

Press releases will not be generated nor will there be USDA contact with the media. Therefore, the media will not have access to USDA data, information, and/or personnel. Information on USDA policies and programs will not be available to the public.

Timely updates to the website will stop, thus valuable agricultural reports and materials will not be available to agricultural economic community and the agriculture and consumer publics.

Visual production, printing and editing of USDA documents will stop. Television and radio transmission will also be stopped.

Requests for information and publications that provide advice and assistance to the public will not be processed.

Direct and sustained public and media contact with organizations, groups and individuals will cease. This will prevent this office from providing responses to requests for clarification and information on national agricultural policies and programs that ultimately impact on the agricultural economy and general well-being of the nation.

The following is a partial list of services that will not be provided in the event of a shutdown:

- a) USDA press releases and reports
- b) Policy guidance and direction on public affairs issues and programs
- c) Teleconferencing and video production
- d) Design services
- e) Photographic Services
- f) Radio and television transmissions
- g) Printing Services
- h) Publications and information distribution